

MARY E. WALKER.

MAY 23, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. MIERS, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 9732.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 9732) granting an increase of pension to Mary E. Walker, have carefully examined the same and all the evidence relating thereto and respectfully report:

This bill as amended proposes to increase from \$8.50 to \$20 per month the pension of Mary E. Walker, of the city of Washington, who served as acting assistant or contract surgeon, United States Army, from March 11, 1864, to June 12, 1865, when her service was honorably terminated. Her original appointment was by order of Major-General Thomas, and she appears to have been paid \$80 per month. In September, 1864, on the recommendation of General Thomas, she was employed under contract at \$100 per month and assigned to the female prison at Louisville, Ky., where she was on duty until May 25, 1865. She was given a medal of honor by Congress and was highly commended by Edw. E. Phelps, M. D., LL. D., medical director at Louisville. The following is a copy of an Executive order in her case:

EXECUTIVE OFFICE.

Whereas it appears from official reports that Dr. Mary E. Walker, a graduate of medicine, "has rendered valuable service to the Government, and her efforts have been earnest and untiring in a variety of ways," and that she was assigned to duty and served as an assistant surgeon in charge of female prisoners at Louisville, Ky., upon the recommendation of Major-Generals Sherman and Thomas, and faithfully served as contract surgeon in the service of the United States, and has devoted herself with much patriotic zeal to the sick and wounded soldiers, both in the field and hospitals, to the detriment of her own health, and has also endured hardships as a prisoner of war four months in a Southern prison while acting as contract surgeon; and

Whereas by reason of her not being a commissioned officer in the military service, a brevet or honorary rank can not, under existing laws, be conferred upon her; and

Whereas in the opinion of the President an honorable recognition of her services and sufferings should be made:

It is ordered, That a testimonial thereof shall be hereby made and given to the said Dr. Mary E. Walker, and that the usual medal of honor for meritorious services be given her.

Given under my hand in the city of Washington, D. C., this 11th day of November, A. D. 1865.

ANDREW JOHNSON, *President*.

By the President:

EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War*.

Claimant appears to have served as an acting assistant surgeon for fifteen months, and to have been a prisoner of war for four months, and as would be natural her general health and constitution were greatly injured by the strain of confinement and exposure.

Dr. E. E. Phelps, medical director at Louisville, Ky., testifies to her having suffered from debility and prostration while under his charge at the female military prison at Louisville, and other evidence tends to show that by the hardships and exposure of the military service her general health was greatly impaired and has so continued ever since, and also that she contracted disease of eyes from which she has continuously suffered ever since.

She filed and established a claim in the Pension Office under the general law for disease of eyes, and for that disability she has been pensioned at \$8.50 per month (one-half total of rank as assistant surgeon). She has claimed that other disabilities, to wit, affection of lungs and impairment of digestive organs, have resulted from her disease of eyes, but this has not been accepted by the medical authorities of the Pension Office, and the claim based thereon was rejected. She appealed the claim to the Secretary of the Interior and the rejection was sustained. She appealed for reconsideration and that appeal was overruled. The action of the Pension Office and the Department appears to have been strictly correct. The disabilities named are not shown to have been due to disease of eyes or in any way connected therewith, but the general debilitated condition does appear to have been due to service and to have existed to a greater or less degree ever since, and by reason of such debilitated condition, together with disease of eyes, Dr. Walker would appear to be totally disabled for manual labor.

Had she served simply as a nurse for the length of time that she served in the higher capacity of assistant surgeon, she would, under the act of August 5, 1892, be entitled to a pension of \$12 per month. Her services were much more valuable and meritorious, involving much more hardship and exposure, and resulted in greatly injuring her general health. For these services she was commended by the officers under whom she served, by the President, and by the Congress.

She is now 66 years of age and poor, and it certainly is not improper for Congress to make some provision for her support for the remainder of her life.

The bill is reported back with the recommendation that it pass when amended as follows:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to place on the pension roll the name of Mary E. Walker, late an acting assistant or contract surgeon in the United States Army, and pay her a pension at the rate of \$20 per month in lieu of that she now receives.

Amend the title so it will read: "A bill granting an increase of pension to Mary E. Walker."